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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

Reports from San Francisco, Cal.—Status of plague—Plague-prevention work.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Blue reports:

December 26. One new case of plague bacteriologically confirmed to-day, an Irishwoman; and 1 death, a Frenchman, at the almshouse, whose case was confirmed December 23.

December 27. No new cases of plague to-day; 1 death to-day, an Irishwoman, diagnosis in whose case was confirmed by bacteriological examination December 26. Total bacteriologically confirmed cases of plague to date, 119; cases clinically verified, 17; total deaths from plague to date, 73.

Statement of plague at San Francisco—Recommendations for the improvement of health conditions.

Doctor Blue reports, December 18:

The plague situation has improved slightly in the last month, there having occurred during the week ended December 14 only 2 cases of plague. The following table shows the progress of the disease by weeks:

Week ended—	Cases bacteriologically confirmed.	Plague deaths.
May 27.....	1	1
August 17.....	3	3
August 24.....	4	1
August 31.....	4	1
September 7.....	6	4
September 14.....	9	7
September 21.....	7	5
September 28.....	10	5
October 5.....	10	3
October 12.....	11	8
October 19.....	6	5
October 26.....	7	6
November 2.....	6	5
November 9.....	6	3
November 16.....	6	3
November 23.....	5	1
November 30.....	3	3
December 7.....	3	3
December 14.....	2	2

Many of the districts which formerly furnished the greater number of cases have had no plague for over a month. Rats are becoming very scarce, especially in the houses. They still exist in the sewers, however, where they are being caught by lowering traps in the man-holes. The sewers of the city are undergoing extensive repairs under the direction of the president of the board of works. In many places the old brick and mortar sewer is being replaced by reenforced concrete.

Acting upon a letter (copy of which is inclosed) to Mr. H. U. Brandenstein, chairman board of supervisors' finance committee, the board of supervisors and the board of health have in preparation ordinances looking to the permanent rat-proofing of all buildings and stables to prevent the entrance of rats into human habitations. It will not be retroactive and little opposition to its passage is anticipated. During the last week a meeting of the chamber of commerce was held with the health authorities for the purpose of arousing the citizens to active cooperation. The chamber has sent notices to its members requesting their assistance in the sanitary work and asking questions relative to the collection and disposal of garbage. The city has also under consideration the municipal collection of garbage. At present this service is performed by private parties. The garbage is destroyed at the sanitary reduction works, a private corporation acting under a charter from the city.

A meeting of the State board of health was held in Sacramento last week. At this meeting a resolution advocating the quarantine of plague-infected cities and those cities which refuse to undertake plague-preventive measures was introduced, but did not pass. The State board of health has appointed several additional inspectors of the dead for the counties surrounding San Francisco.

The force of men employed by the Federal Government in the plague-eradication work shows a high order of discipline and efficiency. The scheme of organization is based on a unit of 5 men under the direction of a foreman. There is an assistant inspector for every two foremen and each district is supplied with two inspectors. Each inspector is responsible for a certain portion of the district. This is subdivided so that each assistant inspector, foreman, and laborer is responsible for a definite part of the work.

The steamship companies, shippers, and others concerned have under consideration a plan for the building of a rat-proof metal compound upon the wharves for the accumulation and storage of flour, bran, grain, etc., intended for shipment to Panama. The walls of this compound will be of corrugated iron 7 feet tall. The top of the wall will flare outward and the sides will be bolted firmly together. It will be placed on a new impervious oak floor.

[INCLOSURE.]

PUBLIC HEALTH AND MARINE-HOSPITAL SERVICE,
OFFICE OF MEDICAL OFFICER IN COMMAND,
San Francisco, Cal., November 22, 1907.

MR. H. U. BRANDENSTEIN,
*Chairman Finance Committee, Board of Supervisors,
City and County of San Francisco, Cal.*

DEAR SIR: Complying with your request I beg leave to submit herewith recommendations for the improvement of the health conditions of San Francisco.

In view of the assumption of the greater part of the expense of the eradication of plague by the Federal authorities, the obligation rests upon your honorable board to enact legislation which will assist in this campaign and will render work now under way speedily successful and permanently effective.

1. The enforcement, through the police department, of order No. 12, second series, of the "Laws, Rules, and Regulations of the Board of Supervisors," with a further provision for the sanitary collection and storage of kitchen refuse, swill, etc., in metal cans with covers. The system of collection and disposal of garbage, as now relied upon by the city, is open to the gravest objections and unless improved at an early date will cost the city far more in treasure than would an incinerator plant of the most improved pattern. The law with respect to the disposal of garbage, if enforced, would meet the requirements, but the collection by householders in open wooden boxes and barrels and the scattering of rat food in back areas and vacant lots serve to defeat the aims of the health authorities.

2. The adoption by the city of the provisions of the circular issued by the board of health in regard to the construction and care of stables. This entails the rat proofing of all places where horses and cows are kept in the city, and should also provide against human beings sleeping in or over stables or that any part of a dwelling be used for the housing of horses or cows.

3. Rat proofing of sewers. It is not alone necessary in the reconstruction work now under way to open the sewer mains and relieve the choked conditions, but every point of ingress for rodents should be carefully sealed with cement, brick, and metal gratings. The point of entrance of soil pipes with the mains in many cases will be found defective and affording ingress and egress to vermin of all kinds. In view of such conditions and the dangers to be apprehended from the transference of infections from the sewers to the dwellings of man, I would recommend, wherever practicable, the use of concrete, vitrified clay, and metal pipes of proper diameter. The old brick and mortar sewers, on account of liability to injury and erosion, are being replaced in other cities by the substitution of more durable material. There can be no doubt that the morbidity and mortality of cities can be materially reduced by greater care in the construction and repair of the channels of disposal of human excretions. In furtherance of this aim, only reliable and competent inspectors should be employed on sewer work, and inspections and repairs should be made at frequent intervals.

4. The disposal of sewage: Since the great earthquake disaster many isolated shacks and irregular camps have sprung up in various

parts of the city which, while affording shelter to human beings, are unprovided with sanitary toilets. The use of shallow earthen latrines in these camps has resulted in widespread pollution of the soil, which will continue to be a menace to the public health until this mode of living is prohibited. It is urged, therefore, that all human habitations without convenient toilet accommodations and sewer connection be vacated. This refers more particularly to those sections where plague prevails.

5. Rat proofing of human habitations: In a city where plague prevails, or is liable to gain a foothold, all dwellings, stores, shops, warehouses, and factories should be made impervious to the ingress of rats and other vermin by the use of concrete or cement on foundations and the screening of windows and other entrances near the ground level. Immediate action looking to the accomplishment of this building reform is earnestly urged upon the legislative and executive authorities of the city of San Francisco.

6. In view of the danger of the spread of plague through the shipment of infected rats in freight, such as grain, flour, and fruit, and the liability of the placing of quarantine by other countries against the shipment of such commodities from this port, the State authorities should be requested to forestall this contingency by the construction of rat-proof wharves and piers.

Doctor Blue further reports plague-prevention work at San Francisco, Oakland, Point Richmond, and Emeryville, Cal., carried out during the week ended December 20:

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

Sick inspected.....	56
Plague case found.....	1
Dead inspected.....	84
Plague among dead inspected.....	2
Premises inspected.....	7, 279
Houses disinfected.....	104
Houses destroyed.....	9
Nuisances abated.....	667
Rats found dead.....	225
Rats trapped.....	1, 852
Bounty rats received.....	1, 520
Poisons placed.....	432, 062
Rats examined bacteriologically.....	1, 133
Rats infected with bacillus pestis.....	4
Contacts inspected.....	91

Week ended December 21, 1907:

OAKLAND, CAL.

Sick inspected.....	245
Dead inspected.....	46
Premises inspected.....	2, 702
Houses disinfected.....	21
Nuisances abated.....	386
Rats found dead.....	115
Rats trapped.....	2, 592
Bounty rats received.....	116
Poisons placed.....	49, 584
Notices served.....	80
Ships inspected.....	28
Ships fumigated.....	2
Rats examined bacteriologically.....	15

PORT RICHMOND, CAL.

Sick inspected	8
Dead inspected	1
Premises inspected	185
Nuisances abated	34
Rats found dead	80
Rats trapped	115
Poisons placed	8, 400

EMERYVILLE, CAL.

Premises inspected	78
Rats found dead	109
Rats trapped	148
Poisons placed	2, 320

Outgoing quarantine transactions.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Hobdy reports, December 16:

Week ended December 14. Seventy-two vessels fumigated and certified to and 53 vessels previously fumigated certified to.

Report from Seattle, Wash.—Measures taken to prevent spread of plague.

Reports received by the Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service show that the measures hereinafter detailed have been taken by the board of health of the State of Washington to prevent the spread of bubonic plague from Seattle, Wash.

The following letter was sent by the secretary of the State board of health to all health officers, both city and county, to county commissioners, and mayors of all cities of the counties bordering on Puget Sound, and copies of ordinances relative to rat-proofing buildings and to the disposal of garbage were at the same time transmitted:

OCTOBER 30, 1907.

The State board of health, after receiving a report from the board of health of the city of Seattle and Doctor White of the United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service in authority here, believe that the plague situation in this State is a matter of grave importance. There is no question that plague exists in one city on Puget Sound, and while every possible precaution is being taken by that city to prevent the spread of this disease, it will not be possible for them to do so without the aid and cooperation of every board of health in this district. Every county on the Sound is more or less in direct communication with this infected port.

The following directions, if carefully and immediately followed out, will aid very greatly in preventing the spread of this disease:

This disease exists and multiplies in human beings and in rats and mice and is carried from one to the other through fleas and other insects; it is therefore a matter of the greatest importance to destroy the rats and mice. This is done in general in two ways—by depriving them of food and of shelter.

To cut out their food supply: All garbage and refuse from kitchens, markets, grocery stores, fish markets, slaughterhouses, and butcher shops should be cleaned up and destroyed. If it can not be destroyed